

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 7-24 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-3, 7-12 and 18-23 are allowed. Claims 13-17 and 24 are rejected.

The Examiner rejects claim 13 under §112 for being indefinite. The Examiner advances two arguments, each of which is discussed in turn. First, the Examiner argues that claim 13 is indefinite because the claim does not recite component(s) within the subscriber line interface circuit that is capable of carrying out the functions recited. The Examiner's argument is not supported by law, which does not mandate that an applicant is required to specifically identify each component within the subscriber line interface circuit for performing the recited act. To the contrary, the claim, as written, is quite clear. Specifically, the claim specifies that the subscriber line interface circuit, which itself is a component of the overall claimed "line card," is capable of performing the following acts: receiving a voice signal from the subscriber line; delivering a ringing signal to the subscriber line; and receiving at least a portion of the transmitted signal from the subscriber line. Thus, based on the plain language of the claim, one skilled in the art is apprised that the recited subscriber line interface circuit is adapted to perform the recited acts. Accordingly, the Examiner's first indefiniteness argument is misplaced.

The Examiner's second indefiniteness argument is also deficient. The Examiner argues that claim 13 provides a use of a subscriber line interface circuit and a digital signal processor, but because the claim "does not set forth any steps involved in the method/process, it is unclear what method/process applicant is intending to encompass." *See* Office Action, p. 2. Because the claim merely recites a user without any active steps, according to the Examiner, claim 13 is indefinite. *Id.* The Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claim 13 is directed to a line card, and not to a method/process as the Examiner suggests. The Examiner's reference to a "method/process" in the context of this apparatus claim ("line card" specifically) is unclear to the Applicant. The claimed line card includes a subscriber line interface circuit and a digital signal processor, which are the components of the line card. The claim itself specifies which act(s) these components of the line card perform. For example, as noted above, the claim specifies that the line card interface circuit is capable of performing the following acts: receiving a voice signal from the subscriber line; delivering a ringing signal to the subscriber line; and receiving at least a portion of the transmitted signal from the subscriber line. Similarly, the claim specifies that the digital signal processor is capable of performing the following acts: processing the voice signal using an analog-to-digital converter; converting the portion of the ringing signal to a digital signal using the analog-to-digital converter; and providing a ring-trip indication in response to the digital signal. These steps further clarify the interaction between the subscriber line interface circuit and the digital signal processor. The language of claim 13 is thus plain and clear on its face. For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 13 is definite.

In light of the reasons presented above, Applicant respectfully asserts that the pending claims are allowable. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is

requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Houston, Texas telephone number (713) 934-4064 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAMS, MORGAN & AMERSON, P.C.
CUSTOMER NO. 23720

Date: December 18, 2006

By: /R. S. Bains/
Ruben S. Bains, Reg. No. 46,532
10333 Richmond, Suite 1100
Houston, Texas 77042
(713) 934-4064
(713) 934-7011 (facsimile)
ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANT(S)